

# News Release

**Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County**  
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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## For Immediate Release

### **Public Health Advises of Dangerous Heat Conditions**

The upcoming days are going to be dangerously hot and humid if you're working or playing outside, or living without air conditioning. Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County is cautioning that weather conditions are going to remain hazardous for a few days.

The primary reason for the public notification is that Public Health expects a stretch of days with daytime heat indices at least in the mid to upper 90's, coupled with nighttime lows in excess of 70 degrees. These types of conditions may cause those without air conditioning to experience significant physical and mental stress. When nighttime lows fail to drop below 70 degrees, the human body has a difficult time recovering from the ongoing heat.

Public Health is stressing that everyone needs to take precautions to prevent heat-related illnesses. Physical activity should be limited as much as possible. Individuals are also encouraged to minimize prolonged exposure to high heat conditions.

Public Health recommends that everyone pay particular attention to the following suggestions to prevent heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of water and non-alcoholic fluids. Put the alcoholic beverages away until cooler weather. Alcoholic drinks can increase a person's risk to heat-related illnesses.
- Decrease physical activity. This is particularly advisable for joggers and high school or junior high school athletic teams. Exercise activities should occur in the morning or early in the evening. Stay in the shade as much as possible.

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- Use air conditioning, if available. Many public buildings, libraries, malls, and other locations are air-conditioned.
- Wear loose lightweight and light-colored cotton clothing.
- Eat light meals.
- Cool down with showers, baths, and recreational swimming.
- Adjust blinds, shades, and awnings to keep out the sun.
- Use your basement, if it is cool, during the hottest hours.
- Be a good neighbor and check on those who may need assistance.
- Individuals with chronic health problems, such as heart disease or lung problems, should minimize activities because the heat will add additional stress.
- Extra caution should be taken for the elderly and young infants and children to assure that they are protected from the heat.
- Children and pets should not be left unattended in closed vehicles. Temperatures can reach dangerous levels rapidly.
- Individuals on various medications should check with their doctor to see if the heat puts them at increased risk.

Additional information is available by calling the Heat Line at 913-2000.

## Background on heat information

High temperatures and humidity stress the body's ability to cool itself, and heat illness becomes a special concern. There are three major forms of heat illnesses: **heat cramps**, **heat exhaustion**, and **heat stroke**, with heat stroke being a life threatening condition.

### Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are muscle spasms that usually affect the arms, legs, or stomach. Frequently they don't occur until sometime later after work, at night, or when relaxing. Heat cramps are caused by dehydration. Although heat cramps can be quite painful, they usually don't result in permanent damage. To prevent them, drink water every 15 to 20 minutes. Sports drinks that replace electrolytes help prevent a loss of sodium caused by excessive sweating. If nausea occurs discontinue fluids and seek medical attention.

### Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is more serious than heat cramps. It occurs when the body's internal air-conditioning system is overworked, but hasn't completely shut down. This condition can occur when you don't drink enough fluids to replace what you're sweating away. The symptoms of heat exhaustion include headache, nausea, weakness, dizziness, heavy perspiration and extreme thirst.

Somebody suffering these symptoms should be moved to a cool location such as a shaded area or air-conditioned building. Have them lie down with their feet slightly elevated. Loosen their clothing, apply cool, wet cloths or fan them. Have them take sips of water or sports drinks. If nausea occurs, discontinue fluids.

If vomiting continues or if little to no improvement after 30 minutes, seek immediate medical attention. Victims of heat exhaustion should avoid strenuous activity for at least a day, and they should continue to drink water to replace lost body fluids.

### Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a life threatening illness with a high death rate. It occurs when the body has depleted its supply of water and salt, and the victim's body temperature rises to deadly levels. A heat stroke victim may first suffer heat cramps and/or the heat exhaustion before progressing into the heat stroke stage, but this is not always the case. It should be noted that, heat stroke is sometimes mistaken for heart attack. It is therefore very important to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stroke and to check for them anytime someone collapses while in a hot environment.

The symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, irrational behavior, loss of consciousness, convulsions, lack of sweating, hot dry skin, and abnormally high body temperature. **If someone is having any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately.** Seconds count. It is vital to lower a heat stroke victim's body temperature. Do not give fluids. Pour water on them, fan them, or apply cold packs until medical help arrives.

## Public Health Heat Advisory Categories

When Public Health calls a “Public Health Heat Watch” or “Public Health Heat Warning”, it means something different from the NWS. The “Public Health Watch” means all community partners who have developed their own heat plans should get ready to implement them within the next 48 hours. A “Public Health Heat Warning” means government organizations, political jurisdictions, and those with heat plans should implement them at once. When Public Health issues a heat watch or warning, it will be preceded by the words “Public Health.”

Public Health considers many factors before issuing a public alert. Those items include daytime high temperature, overnight low temperature, wind, cloud cover, dewpoint, multiple day forecast, type of air mass, and additional information from a variety of other sources, including the NWS and area meteorologists. Another primary consideration is time of year. High temperatures and high humidities in the early portion of the summer season place considerably more stress on individuals than those same temperatures and humidities in the later portion of the summer when people have become acclimated to the summer weather.

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**Listed below is the differentiation between  
Public Health Heat Watch and Public Health Heat Warning:**

### Public Health Heat Watch

This is the notification used for oppressive heat episodes that are predicted to reach the Public Health Heat Warning level within the next 48 hours. When this condition is reached, PHDMC will issue a Public Health Heat Watch notification to the public via the media, public agencies, local governments and healthcare providers. During a Public Health Heat Watch, public agencies, local governments, and healthcare providers should prepare to implement their heat mitigation plans. **This is the “get ready step” for the implementation of heat plans.** A Public Health Heat Watch may be cancelled, maintained or may be upgraded to Public Health Heat Warning, based on updated meteorological forecasts.

### Public Health Heat Warning

This notification is for more severe or extended heat conditions. PHDMC will issue a Public Health Heat Warning notification to the public via the media, public agencies, local governments and healthcare providers when it has been determined that expected conditions within the next 24-hours indicate heat plans within our community should be implemented. During a Public Health Heat Warning, public agencies, local governments and healthcare providers should implement their heat mitigation plans at once. **This is the “action step” for the implementation of heat plans.** A Public Health Heat Warning may be cancelled or maintained, based on updated meteorological forecasts.